

a rate setting unit setting a voice encoding bit rate, if the voice signal is a vowel

b) said voice encoding bit rate is set to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded.

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6.(amended) A rate control method for a variable-rate encoding system, comprising:

(a) calculating unit calculating an LSP coefficient obtained from a voice signal;

(b) judging whether an interval between the LSP coefficients is equal to or less than a prescribed threshold value;

b) (c) judging whether the voice signal is a vowel when a voice part of the voice signal is sounded; and

(d) if the voice signal is a vowel setting a voice encoding bit rate to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded.

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10.(amended) A computer-readable storage medium which records a program for enabling a computer to implement a rate control method for a variable-rate encoding system, the process comprising:

(a) calculating unit calculating an LSP coefficient obtained from a voice signal;

b3 (b) judging whether an interval between the LSP coefficients is equal to or less than a prescribed threshold value;

(c) judging whether the voice signal is a vowel when a voice part of the voice signal is sounded; and

(d) if the voice signal is a vowel setting a voice encoding bit rate to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded.